MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS HELD MARCH 20, 1914.

The fourth meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts during the fiscal year 1914 was held in their office in the Lemon Building, 1729 New York avenue, NW., Washington, D. C., on Friday, March 20, 1914. The following members were present:

Daniel C. French, Chairman;
Frederick Law Olmsted;
Cass Gilbert;

Charles Moore;

Edwin H. Blashfield;

Peirce Anderson;

also Colonel Wm. W. Harts, U. S. Army, the Secretary and Executive Officer.

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 9:35 a . m., and proceeded at once to the business before it.

1. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING: The minutes of the preceding meeting, held on January 23, 1914, were presented and approved.

2. IN RE TEMPORARY TREATMENT OF CENTRAL ISLAND OF UNION ST TION PLAZA: The Secretary laid before the Commission, for an informal opinion, a plan submitted by the District Commissioners for a temporary treatment in grass and flower beds of the central island of the Union Station Plaza, with the statement that the Commissioners consider it highly desirable and necessary now to substitute some such treatment for the present bare treatment of that area. The Commission strongly disapproved the carrying out of the plan presented. After discussion, Mr. Anderson was appointed a committee of one with power to study the matter and, in view of the insistence of the District Commissioners that some such treatment

should now be carried out, to prepare and forward to Colonel Harts for submission to the District Commissioners a definite recommendation and plan on behalf of the Commission for such a temporary treatment.

3. NEW SITE FOR BARTHOLDI FOUNTAIN: The Secretary also asked the advice of the Commission regarding a proper future site for the Bartholdi fountain which is soon to be removed from its present location in the Botanic Garden grounds. The Commission felt this to be a matter of a careful consideration of available sites, and advised Colonel Harts to store the fountain, if necessary, in order that the matter of the new site could later be studied.

4. MERIDIAN HILL: Colonel Harts presented ~~third~~ fourth preliminary plans and designs for the treatment of Meridian Hill Park, prepared under his direction in the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, which were a development of earlier preliminary designs previously submitted to the Commission and approved by them. Mr. Burnap, landscape architect of the office of Public Buildings and Grounds, was present in consultation. The Commission made various minor suggestions, and advised Colonel Harts that the general design couldbe presented to Congress as a preliminary design for the treatment of that area. The designs and plans were thereupon approved as preliminary designs, subject to further study and re-submission to the Commission.

The design for the treatment of the lower portion of this area includes provision for a monument to President Buchanan, and the Commission suggested to Colonel Harts that Mr. J. Lawrason Riggs of Baltimore, Executor of the estate of Harriet Lane Johnston, the proposed donor of this monument to the United States, be invited to inspect the designs, and in particular that sketch which shows the form that the Commission approve for a monument to President Buchanan in this area.

5. MEMORIAL WINDOW TO DAVID GLASGOW FARRAGUT FOR THE NAVAL ACADEMY CHAPEL: The Commission next, at the request of the Farragut Memorial Window Committee of the Naval Academy Graduates' Association, inspected seven designs submitted to the latter for a window in memory of Admiral David Glasgow Farragut. These designs were submitted by the committee to the Commission with the request that they arrange them in the order of their artistic merit and make any suggestions they deem desirable to make them more appropriate from a naval standpoint without impairing their artistic merit. Commander C. T. Jewell, Secretary and Treasurer of the Committee, later appeared before the Commission upon request. He stated that his committee had not stated a preference for any one of the designs, and that the designs do not suggest the purpose of his committee, being purely ecclesiastical and not naval in character. It was explained to Commander Jewell that the Commission felt that, because of their lack of information as to lighting and other conditions essential to a satisfactory solution of the problem, they could make no recommendation regarding the designs. It was further suggested to Commander Jewell that a designer be selected direct by his committee who could give the requisite study to the question and create for the Committee a really satisfactory design. The Commission, as an act of courtesy, appointed Mr. Blashfield a committee of one with power to aid Commander Jewell's committee as far as possible in reaching a decision regarding a satisfactory design for the window. (See Exhibit A.)

The Commission, in this connection, later discussed the question of their acting as a jury in irregularly conducted competitions, or such where the problem of making an award is rendered difficult or impossible by their not being fully informed regarding the conditions surrounding the proposed project. They felt that in questions of this kind the authorities in charge of the project should select and engage some competent professional advisor to aid them in drawing up

specifications, &c, before submitting the final designs to the Commission for criticism and advice. Mr. Olmsted, Mr. Blashfield, and the Chairman, ex officio, were appointed a committee to prepare for the Commission a statement setting forth their attitude upon this subject. This statement, when adopted, can then be printed in the next annual report and cited by the Secretary to inquirers whenever occasion arises.

6. MEADE MEMORIAL: The Commission, by appointment, at eleven o'clock met a committee consisting of Mr. John W. Frazier, Secretary of the Meade Memorial Commission of the State of Pennsylvania, Mr. John B. Patrick of Harrisburg, Pa., and Mr. John McElroy, Editor of the National Tribune of Washington, D. C., all representatives of committees of the Meade Memorial Commission of Pennsylvania, regarding a site and design for the proposed memorial in the city of Washington to General George Gordon Meade. Representative J. W. Logue of Pennsylvania also appeared in this connection. After a discussion of various sites suggested along Pennsylvania Avenue by the above committee, the Commission approved, as a suitable site, a location suggested along the south side of Pennsylvania avenue, in the immediate northwest vicinity of the Grant Memorial, provided Congress is willing to consent to its use for this purpose. The committee was also informed that, in awarding the contract for a monument, the Commission believe the best result is achieved by giving it outright to an artist of recognized ability without competition, or without other competition than that afforded by a comparison of his work with that of such other artists as may be selected for comparison.

A letter from Representative George W. Edmonds of Pennsylvania with reference to this matter was also read to the Commission.

7. BARRY MONUMENT: The Commission was informed that the Barry Statue Commission xxx requested their advice regarding the acceptability of the completed bronze statue of Commodore Barry for the Barry monument in Franklin Park. Mr. French was appointed a committee of one with power to inspect and report upon this statue.

8. CAVALRY GROUP FOR GRANT MEMORIAL: The Commission was also informed that the Grant Memorial Commission desired advice upon the full-sized model of the cavalry group for the Grant Memorial, which was understood to be completed and ready for casting. Mr. French was appointed a committee of one with power to inspect this group at the studio of the sculptor, Mr. E. H. Shrady, and report upon its acceptability to the Grant Memorial Commission.

9. DESIGN FOR THE TYLER MONUMENT: The Secretary laid before the Commission the request of the Secretary of War for their good offices in examining the designs for the proposed monument to be erected over the grave of the late President John Tyler in Hollywood Cemetery, Richmond, Virginia, and asking for a report and recommendation regarding them for the action of the Department in making a selection for the proposed monument. The Commission later in the day inspected these designs on the fifth floor of the War Department building. They found none of the designs to be worthy of execution, and felt this to be probably due to the method of securing the designs which was not such as to call out the best talent in the country that might otherwise have been available.

The Commission anticipated, however, that the War Department, under the terms of the Programme of Competition, might find itself compelledto accept one or more of the designs. In this case they recommended that design numbered 6 (T. F. McGann &Sons Co., Boston, Mass.) be given the award, with the suggestion that in

its execution, the bronze reliefs be omitted and low reliefs, cut into the stone, be substituted; and that the position of the eagles appearing on the top be changed so that they will appear at the front and rear faces of the shaft instead of at the sides. The Commission further recommended that design numbered 7 B (U. S. J. Dunbar, sculptor, Washington, D. C.) be adjudged the second best, as this was considered worthy of that reward. (See Exhibit B)

10. SCULPTURAL GROUP - "THE INDIAN BUFFALO HUNT": In acting upon the request of the Committee on the Library of the House of Representatives for an expression concerning the artistic merit and wisdom of purchase of a group of statuary known as "The Indian Buffalo Hunt", the Commission later in the day inspected this piece (a full-sized plaster model) at the studio of the sculptor, Mr. H. K. Bush-Brown, at 1729 G street, NW. The Commission believed this work to have great artistic merit, and to be worthy of acquisition by the Government. The additional suggestion was made that, if the group is acquired by the Government, its location and placement should be carefully studied with relation to the surroundings, as the picturesque character of the group would not make it available for all locations but eminently suitable for some.

11. PLAN NO. 100: The Commission authorized the Secretary to have the large basic plan, numbered 100, hanging in the Board Room brought up to date by a competent draftsman.

12. IN RE PANAMA-PACIFIC EXPOSITION: Colonel Harts brought up the question of the collection of suitable material for exhibition by the Commission at the San Francisco Exposition in 1915. He stated that the Government Exhibit Board had allotted the sum of $4,000 for the use of the Commission in gathering exhibits

along the lines of its activities, and that, as the Board was anxious for the Commission to utilize this entire amount, it seemed an unusual opportunity to acquire a collection which would not only be extremely interesting for this exhibition but constitute a nucleus for future exhibitions of the Commission as well as for its own files.

He read extracts from a memorandum prepared by him, which had previously been transmitted to each member, suggesting various exhibits that might be considered desirable. Of these the Commission thought that full-sized colored photographic reproductions of some of the Park Commission Plans would be very desirable. The Commission also considered, as quite desirable, some high-class panoramic views of Washington as it is today, photographic enlargements of certain monuments and buildings in the city, and photographic enlargements of old views of the city contrasted with photographic enlargements of present conditions from the same point of view. A model of the Lincoln Memorial was also considered very desirable for the exhibit.

Mr. Olmsted, Mr. Moore, and Colonel Harts were appointed a committee to consider and report to the Commission at the next meeting regarding the preparation of certain charts and maps showing the development of Washington along various lines since L'Enfant's time, as part of the proposed exhibit.

13. IN RE SUCCESSION OF MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION: Colonel Harts informed the members that, in accordance with suggestions at the last meeting, he had an interview with the President upon the question of the successors to those members of the Commission whose terms expire on June 14th of this year. He said he informed the President that the Commission felt that, instead of the succession of an entirely new body of members at one time, as would occur ~~under~~

under present arrangements in June, they deem it advisable so to arrange the succession that the ~~five~~ members whose terms expire in June do not leave office at once but be reappointed in such a manner that not over two vacancies occur thereafter among them and on the Commission in any one succeeding year; this method, he had explained to the President, would prevent any sudden changes in those basic principles and policies which the Commission have created and adhered to, and would be the means of rendering them as continuous as possible. He stated that the President recognized the advantages of such an arrangement, but doubted his being enabled under the law to appoint any member of the Commission for a period of less than four years; that he would, however, if the Commission are sincere in this regard, appoint all the retiring members for a further period of four years, leaving it to these members to arrange among themselves who would resign at the end of one year, two years, &c, in order that the suggested method of succession would be established. Colonel Harts then submitted a schedule, which had previously received the sanction of the Chairman, suggesting the length of time each of the ~~five~~ reappointed members should serve. This was formally adopted before being read by the Secretary, and is as follows:

That Daniel C. French, sculptor, ~~reappointed for four years,~~ resign on June 14, 1915.

That Charles Moore and Thomas Hastings, reappointed for four years, resign on June 14, 1917.

That Cass Gilbert and Frederick Law Olmsted, reappointed for four years, resign on June 14, 1918.

In view of the expiration by limitation of the terms of service of Mr. Blashfield and Mr. Anderson in 1916, the terms of service of all the present members of the commission will then expire as follows:

Mr. French's on June 14, 1915.

Mr. Blashfield's on May 30, 1916.

Mr. Anderson's on July 4, 1916.

Mr. Moore's on June 14, 1917.

Mr. Hastings' on June 14, 1917.

Mr. Gilbert's on June 14, 1918.

Mr. Olmsted's on June 14, 1918.

14. The Commission left the office at 1:45 p. m., and, after a short interval for lunch, inspected the models and designs for the Tyler monument on the 5th floor of the War Department building, and the sculptural group "The Indian Buffalo Hunt" at the studio of the sculptor at 1729 G street, N.W.

The Commission thereupon adjourned, at 3:30 p. m., subject to the call of the Chairman.

Colonel, U. S. Army,
Secretary and Executive Officer.

Approved: _____:

Chairman.

Washington, D. C.,

March 23, 1914.

Commander C. T. Jewell, U. S. N.,
Secretary-Treasurer, Farragut
Memorial Winodw Committee of the
Naval Academy Graduates' Assn.,
2135 R street, NW., Washington, D. C.

My dear Sir:

Referring to your letter of March seventeenth and to your conference with the Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting on Friday last upon the designs for a window for the Chapel at the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland, in memory of Admiral Glasgow Farragut, I beg to inform you that, because of their lack of information as to lighting and other conditions essential to a satisfactory solution of the problem which were explained to you in detail as the conference, the Commission feel that no formal recommendation should be made by them. The Commission, however, appointed Mr. Edwin H. Blashfield (48 Central Park south, New York City) a committee to aid your committee as far as he finds it possible in reaching a decision regarding a satisfactory design for this window. It is suggested that you communicate with him direct.

By direction of the Commission:

Very truly, yours,

WM. W. HARTS

Colonel, U. S. Army,

Secretary and Executive Officer.

Exhibit A

7th Ind. ABC

The Commission of Fine Arts, March 21, 1914 - To the Secretary of War, through The Chief of Engineers, U. S. A.

1. The Commission of Fine Arts, at their meeting held yesterday, examined the various designs submitted for the monument to be erected over the grave of the late John Tyler, former President of the United States, in the Hollywood Cemetery, Richmond, Virginia, as authorized by Act of Congress.

2. The Commission deem none of the designs worthy of execution. This probably is due to the method of securing the designs, which was not such as to call out the best talent in the country that might otherwise have been available.

3. Sould, however, the Department, under the terms of the Programme of Competition, find itself compelled to accept one or more of the designs, then the Commission recommend that design numbered 6 be given the award. In the execution of this design the bronze reliefs should be omitted and low reliefs, cut into the stone, should be substituted; and the position of the eagles on the top should be changed so that they will appear at the front and rear faces of the shaft instead of at the sides. The Commission further recommend that design numbered 7 B adjudged the second best, as this is considered worthy of such reward.

By direction of the Commission of Fine Arts:

Wm. W. HARTS

Colonel, U. S. Army,

Secretary and Executive Officer.

Exhibit B

Washington, D. C.,
March 24, 1914.

The President,

The White House.

My dear Mr. President:

Referring to the recent interview I had with you respecting the re-appointment of the members of the Commission of Fine Arts whose terms of office expire on June 14th of this year, I beg to say that the memorandum you asked me to prepare has been delayed until after their meeting which took place on Friday last.

The plan suggested by you received immediate approval, and resolutions were adopted providing for a change in the personnel of the Commission yearly, commencing with one vacancy in 1915 and two in each succeeding year until the personnel has been completely changed. The Commission feel that it is highly desirable to have new men appointed, but believe that no large number should be changed at any one time as otherwise their policies, so satisfactory thus far, might not be continuous. I see, therefore, no reason now why your suggestions should not be adopted and the reappointment made of the five members whose terms expire on the fourteenth of June of this year.

It is, therefore, suggested that the following members of the Commission of Fine Arts be reappointed for four years and until their successors have been appointed and qualified, taking effect June 15, 1914:

Daniel C. French, sculptor, of New York City.

Frederick Law Olmsted, landscape architect, of Brookline, Mass.

Thomas Hastings, architect, of New York City.

Cass Gilbert, architect, of New York City.

Charles Moore, banker, of Detroit, Michigan.

The terms of the other two members of the Commission, Mr. Edwin H. Blashfield, painter, of New York City, and Mr. Peirce Anderson, architect, of Chicago, Illinois, expire by limitation in 1916.

Respectfully,

W. W. HARTS

Colonel, U. S. Army,

Secretary and Executive Officer.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 25, 1914.

My dear Colonel Harts:

Thank you for your letter of March twenty-fourth. I shall be very glad to reappoint the five gentlemen you suggest on the Commission of Fine Arts.

Cordially and faithfully yours,

(SIGNED) WOODROW WILSON

Colonel William W. Harts,
1729 New York avenue,
Washington, D. C.